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Romaine

Yellow Fever - 1822.

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1766
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**OBSERVATIONS, REASONS
AND
FACTS,
DISPROVING IMPORTATION ;
AND ALSO, ALL
SPECIFIC PERSONAL CONTAGION
IN
YELLOW FEVER,
FROM ANY
LOCAL ORIGIN,
EXCEPT THAT WHICH ARISES FROM THE COMMON CHANGES
OF THE
Atmosphere.**

BY BENJ. ROMAINE.

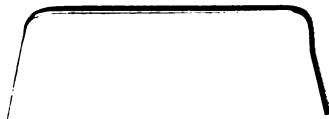
“ From nature's chain, whatever link you strike,
“ Tenth, or ten-thousandth, breaks the chain alike.”
Popo.

NEW-YORK:
PRINTED BY J. C. SPYRAS.
1823.

Med 1766.7



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1823.**



PREFACE.

THE following Essays were commenced in July, 1802, at the first alarm of fever, and were intended to keep pace with it through the season. The first number was communicated for the "Evening Post," as follows :

SIR,

An old citizen solicits, through your paper, to address our City Board of Health. Every sincere theorist, will always afford a full scope to all reasonable tests of his hypothesis.

Yours respectfully,

AN OLD CITIZEN.

WILLIAM COLEMAN, Esq.

Mr. Coleman noticed, in his paper, that An Old Citizen could receive back his communication at the office.

I continued to write, or rather to compile from my notes, and observations on this subject. My connection with the Board of Health in 1795, 1798 and 1805, had afforded to me many opportunities of observation.

Three of the present numbers were next submitted to Mr. Stone of the Commercial Advertiser, who declined because of their "*length and novelty.*" Four or five numbers were next, and alternately offered for publication to Mr. Verplanck, of the New-York American, and Mr. Carter of the Statesman ; both declined, on the ground that so much had already been said on the subject.—Six numbers were then presented by me in person, and in confidence, to Mr. Lang of the City Gazette, on the 47th of September last ; who said their publication "might lead to a controversy."—They were lastly submitted, alternately, (and nearly as now offered to the public) to two members of the Board of Health, who both dissent from the *principles* contained in them, they holding to the importation of our *Summer* and *Fall* fever.

My entire conviction, nevertheless, of the truth and general usefulness of the facts contained in these numbers, have continued

to acquire confirmation through my endeavours to raise and obtain objections to them. The late highly interesting letter of Doctor Andrew B. Cooke, surgeon of the United States ship Hornet, respecting the fatality among her crew, embraces, in elegant form, and in *fact-substance*, the same principles, causing yellow fever, and now also contended for. A dissertation also on Epidemic diseases by Dr. Charles Maclean of Calcutta, of like sentiment, was recently favoured to me, by Dr. —— Hitchcock, of this city. I am therefore, now, the more emboldened, to offer my humble numbers to the public inspection, and in the same form in which they were first written.

I have not studied system, not intending to write a treatise on Yellow Fever, but to employ my leisure moments, in seeking truth on that important subject; and the most simple, though *unreserved* way of expressing it.

If a most sincere good intention, and especially not to wound the feelings of any one, shall afford to me any shield to palliate for errors, I may rest in perfect security, even from a general *public dissent* about the *facts*, or *opinions*, now in controversy; and with which all of us are daily struggling to obtain the light of a *true knowledge*; both here and in Europe.

With a due sense of profound regard,

I am, the public's most obedient servant,

BENJAMIN ROMAINE.

NO. I.

AUGUST. 13, 1822.

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH.

WHAT is the origin, the cause or causes, the remedy, or remedies, and the best preventives of our annually prevailing fever ? And what renders them, or ONE of them, more severe in one year and season than another ? And is Yellow Fever *specifically contagious* and a *distinct disease* amongst us ?

These questions have given rise to a multiplicity of theories, and have....distracted the public mind for thirty years,...past, and without coming to *one single decision on known facts*. At this time they exhibit an increased state of alarm, and delirium, far beyond any time of fever since 1793.

From this last date, our summer and fall fevers were dissected, by our physicians, into about five divisions ; one of them, and said to be *entirely distinct*, was then declared, a "*specifick disease, like Small Pox,—highly contagious, and requiring a special treatment* ;" and at this day, it is officially declared that, "*four-fifths of the Faculty believe and practice one way, and one-fifth the other!*"

This *woful error*, this *mistaken theory*, of the *contagiousness* of yellow fever, and the new *medical practice upon it*, yet remains the sad basis of *our fears* ; it continues to excite the general terror—and the public reason has never been able to overcome its effects, though a thousand times opposed to a better judgment. A certain pride of character, with a thousand interests, pecuniary, mercantile, governmental and otherwise, have already become intwined in this theory, among us ; and as they have existed in the old world for many centuries, and to this day remain equally undecided.

Can the continuance of these excitements, be a matter of surprise, for a moment, when we daily hear, sounded in our ears, the words "*Contagion, Pestilence, Plague*," &c. ? And all these dressed in language from the lips, and through the public journals, of the most terrific cast and character ; as well by the *foreign* as the *domestic origin* believers in contagion. It is to be regretted that a few of our most learned men also, through the same medium of *speech* and of the *press*, daily vie with each other, to exert every of their resources of learned wisdom, to bring to a *focus*, all the ancient plagues of Egypt, and every other pestilence since, throughout the world, to have a bearing of *full analogy, on our old climate fever* ! The power, also, of chymists so to impregnate a small portion of air, or other matter, *in a bottle*, with every poisonous mixture, or *gas*, destructive to human life ;—these are all now made to concentrate, and actually to exist, *in full formation*, and in *great quantity*, within the *prescribed limits of our "infected district!"*

From every other spot of earth, such imputation would be repelled with indignation. Here, theories must be sustained at all hazards, and every consequence !

Our city is daily exhibited to the world, by ourselves, as a spot of earth becoming totally unfit for human habitation ; and a few years

more of learned display, and like excitement, will more than half destroy it !

The frequent descriptions of death, by fever, are also rendered most horrid ! This is both unnecessary, cruel, and untrue, as far as I have witnessed them, or have been truly informed.

If our fever, chance to overleap the limits now designated as the "infected district," and a patient is taken with yellow fever beyond its *traceable* bounds, our *foreign* and *domestic* theorists become alarmed, and the terrors of "contagion" are spread far beyond any former period of fever, though of incomparably greater calamity. We now, *more than ever*, shun the unfortunate sick individual, (*himself in terrors*) when, perhaps in the very act of retreat from a friend or relative sick with fever, we exclaim "Oh, no, *it is not personally contagious!* I leave town, however, or country, as may be, and *fear not to be able to see you again!*" &c.

We now also retire regularly, as before a formidable *foreign* enemy who is declared to have landed at Rector-street wharf, and joined the *local* allies in Trinity Church-yard, and now advancing upon us. We, in retreat, form lines of circumvallation, and of various substances, of wood, lime and other matter. Your honorable Body will, no doubt, take into most serious consideration, the *lasting and frightful effects*, on the public mind, from this recent practice, now for the second time essayed, with the best intentions ; and are mostly objectionable because they all tend to revive and confirm, the almost exploded doctrine of a " *specific contagion in our fever, like that of Small Pox.*"

Gentlemen, it is on a *true knowledge of local facts alone*, we can depend. The evils already done, through a supposed *importation*, and *foreign analogies* with the plague, &c., and also, from the formation of *ideal domestic "poisons,"* producing Yellow Fever, are immense ; and highly distressing to our citizens ! The present heterogeneous mass of *mere opinion*, as to *origin, cause, remedy and preventive*, can only arrive at the nearest standard of truth, by returning back to our original knowledge of things, and first discarding all theories, both *foreign* or *domestic* on this subject. Your honorable Body alone, can give the present current of the daily reports made to you, such a direction. Instead of so great pertinacity to trace every case to the *district*, let the immediate condition of the sick be critically inquired into, as respects their *PREVIOUS EXPOSURE to sudden heats, colds, damps, rains, &c.* ; and all other " *infections*" will speedily vanish to the dark abodes of their original, and superstitious existence in the eastern hemisphere, where they have reigned triumphant, more than two thousand years.

Two remarkable changes take place in our climate, in every year ; the *Spring*, when vegetation struggles into life, and the *Summer and Fall* when it returns to death. At no time of *any year* do we find our heat and cold, our wet and dry alike. These two *seasons, however, never fail to test the soundness, or bad condition of every description of animal life.* Diseased persons, *valetudinarians, and half broken-down constitutions, are most likely to be se-*

riously affected, in those seasons, by the slightest cold, or *check of perspiration*. From a neglect to guard against this great and acknowledged "moving cause of our calamity," and from a false belief of a "specific infection," communicated only by being inhaled through the mouth or nostrils,—the soundest health and most vigorous constitutions have, in like manner fallen victims to *inattention, imprudencies, folly, and the ignorance of the effects produced by the common changeableness of our atmosphere*. These dangerous changes, with us, begin about the middle of July, and end about the middle of October; after which our atmosphere becomes *cool and uniform*. In Egypt, and generally in that latitude, the fever, or plague, departs when the *heat becomes regular*, and the atmosphere ceases to be *changeable*!

While we shall continue to be *led* to believe, that some *deleterious poison, some unknown unseen, undefined and deadly miasmatick effluvia, is imported, or generated among us*, (since 1793) and by mixing with the air we breathe, shall be *conceived* of as commencing and communicating its destructive progress, from some *marked point* in our City, where a few individuals, (among one hundred and thirty thousand) may first chance to sicken and die, and such points in this season may, *at almost any time*, be *designated and traced* (by a few ingenious men, who have become proudly weded to their several theories)—to some ship or vessel, or to some one, among the few trifling nuisances which may yet be found, and which are *unavoidable* in all Cities.

To sustain the two theories, the importers must find a ship, and the home origin believers, a nuisance; and both must be near where persons first become sick of fever. Vessels from healthy ports, as the law directs, are permitted, by our vigilant health officer, after four days examination and detention at Quarantine, to proceed within some hundred yards of the City Docks, and there wait a re-examination by the port Physician; who permits or rejects their unloading at the city docks, as the several crews are found healthy, and the vessels clean.

Two or three of these vessels unloaded at, or near Rector-Street wharf, and about that time two children, and two or three other persons in the neighborhood of Washington, Rector and Greenwich streets were found sick of "*bilious fever!*" suspicion became attached to these ships, and they were "*most critically*" examined by the officers of the City Board of Health;—All was well. The track of importation vanished, until certain strips of "*infected raw hide*" were discovered to be nailed about some sugar boxes; and these were declared, and yet remain the *only TRACEABLE REALITIES*, to sustain the importers in their cause of a foreign origin, this season!

A small "*domestic*" Ciss-Pool also, about two feet diameter, and three feet deep, was found in the same neighborhood. It was instantly cleaned of its "*noxious sediment*;" though the mischief was said to be done!—Yet, so it was that, those who cleansed it, as *usual on such occasions*, escaped the fever, as the sailors frequently do who import it! Then it was and for the first time that the inti-

of Trinity Church Yard, adjoining Rector-Street, was declared to be the *real and true spot*, where the chymical poison of Yellow Fever was generated; and this capt'd the climax of contagion this year, favorable to the domestic believers.

This "pestilence" has, on some occasions, been ingeniously wrought up into ropes of "sand ballast," or fixed in the fine cotton contained in a box of jewelry, and is thus declared to have brought the plague into London. These theories, with a thousand other ways and means, all requiring for their support, that the contagion be, most strenuously, held to begin, and continue its direful progress from the identified points of "infection." The foreign and local believers in contagion, agree in these special locations; and if the fever appears elsewhere, *both* are instantly seen in a state of delirium. It then requires that, to sustain both theories, this said "*subtile poison*," be incessantly represented as making its way from those "contagious reservoirs," and always moving (spectre like) in the "thick and silent darkness; crawling along," either from ~~SHIPS, SEWERS, OR CHURCH-YARDS,~~ to our dwelling houses, through our Lanes and our Broadways, seizing, as with the grip of death, and unawares, its every human victim. "*THUS MAKING MISERABLE EOWARDS OF US ALL!*" Ah! "Our golden days" of blessed ignorance, previous to 1793, are feared to be gone forever!

This dreadful enemy is represented in the day time, "as rising from, and again at night falling to the earth!" This latter effect, is made to account for the known and entire safety, and good health of our *Night-watch*! But after sun-rise, the "pestilence again floats in the air; and every individual is then rendered liable, if in any way near the *district*, to inhale the deadly poison!" The opposing theorists, generally agree also in these things. The slightest indisposition of every watchman, in the district, has been diligently sought for; though fortunately none of them have died, to my knowledge, or even been seriously ill. None have been reported that I recollect.

The reason for the perfect safety of our day-watch in the "*infected district*," and after sun-rise, has not yet been made out, by our *theoretic leaders*! The "*ponderous weight of the miasma*," however, (though floating in the air, in the day time!) is declared to be the reason of its "*slow movement, and also why our high winds fail to spread it over our entire city more rapidly!*"

It is in vain to ask the theorists how they know all this? The answers overwhelm themselves. When facts are mistaken for fancies and fancy for facts, the imagination deprives the mind of all resting place. It would indeed have been a novel sight to witness the battle at the foot of Rector-street, where it was, most seriously proposed to your honorable Body, to discharge, exactly "four thousand cannon shots," at the pestilential enemy. This theorist is said to have been indignant, that his project was not experimented, *because of the paltry consequence of destroying all the lamps and glass windows in and about the scene of action.*

The regular march of this fancied contagion, up Broadway, towards our new Hall, is now daily calculated to advance by feet and inches ; and is traced in *right lines*, diverging into the cross-streets, to the right and left, at right angles, and intirely deviating from its *circular movements* in 1805, as then traced, by my friend Doctor Hosack. "Its" present irregular leaps, and especially its passing over the heads of a large unremoved population of our city, from Rector to Cheapside-street, now baffles the wise and the simple, as respects locality. An entire new origin is sought for by the affrighted theorists ; and this *new fever* is already declared to possess "a distinct type from that in Rector-street ; though far more malignant, and like unto the plague, or black-fever among the Turks on the southern shores of the Mediterranean Sea !"

Here again we see another sublime display of imagination, to sustain a mere phantom ; while the healthy citizen is left without a *single fact* as a guide or preventive (except that of running away;) the sick patient, distracted in body and mind, and destitute of a cure,—our beautiful city in danger, and verging on to destruction ; while we are yet daily led, in the pursuit of solving a succession of Theoretic Enigmas !

To distant readers, even the few theories above stated, may be conceived of as a mere tale that is told, and unworthy of belief.—Opinions, however, far more incredible, and even ridiculous, might be now detailed with the strictest truth.

The only real point is, whether our "Yellow Fever" be the effect of a **SPECIFIC POISON**, and **CONTAGIOUS** ? The foreign and domestic believers (and those on both sides) say, "It is ;" and thereby prove their violent disputes, for thirty years past, to have been about **NOTHING ESSENTIAL** ; except to convince the world, ultimately, of the entire *fallacy of both* ! If such be the effect, "when Doctors disagree, and soundest Casuists doubt ;—why not you and me ?"

AN OLD CITIZEN.

NO. II.

AUGUST 21, 1822.

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH,

WHILE mystical suppositions, shall obtain belief, to the exclusion of physical fact, the present abracadabra will continue, our terrors be increased and unsocial habits spread far and wide. The "contagion of our fever will extend the limits of our *intellectual blockade*, and perhaps succeed, for thirty years more, to fence out of view, all our common sense on this subject, both as to *origin, preventive and cure*. These were all well known, and successfully practiced upon, in the good old sudorific way, by the old *Doctors and Nurses*, for ages before 1793 ; when the new *Theories commenced their giddy rounds*.

Again, while fears from vague surmises continue to be excited, we shall neglect to study and combat with the natural evils of our climate in a proper manner ; and even our medical men will fail to arrive at the *true knowledge* to guard themselves and us, against the *real causes* which produce the evils of it.—Viz.—A neglect of attention to the excessive heat, sudden cold, chilling damps, rains, and a stagnant, which always becomes, a foul atmosphere,—wherever they may exist.—These act most effectively, on diseased, fatigued, overloaded and overheated bodies, previously surcharged, perhaps, with every description of meats and drinks ; and the patient already *laboring* in the feverish struggle of a bad digestion ; not of a “secretly inhaled poison,” but of a *known* and *positively “infected”* animal and vegetable matter, and acutually contained within the “infected district” of our bodies !

If in such a state of “*PREDISPOSITION*,” the pores of the body (through which, by far, the greatest portion of our food is discharged)—be suddenly closed, and which the chills effect and indicate, from a sudden check of the perspiration,—the patient is then in a *dangerous condition*. The struggle for relief, in such case, frequently proves ineffectual to sustain the putrid load ; then it is that, putrefaction (always *rapid* in this season) takes place, and the patient dies.

In perfect health, these sudden cold affections of the air, the damps, &c. frequently pass off lightly. The strong and robust, are rarely injured by them ; therefore to account for so great a malady as *Yellow Fever*, without some other kind of “*infection*” has become *unfashionable* of belief ; because so many escape death from that cause, it is probable, that not one in one hundred even in any season of fever, would have *Yellow Fever*, or *Consumptions* from slight colds, and specially if in *perfect health* at the time of attack ; though it is known that, these two destroyers of human life, are formed by *neglected colds*.

But says one.—why are not these effects of cold and heat the same in every year ?—It need only be said, generally, that,—palpable facts prove, that diseases of every kind, prevail differently in every year, both in Town and Country, and over the whole globe. But if *Ships*, *Sewers* and *Church-Yards* be the cause,—then indeed must the fever prevail every year ! The true cause of fevers will only be found, through a critical annalysis of the weather in all Climates, and the local place of Countries, Cities, Towns, districts and neighborhoods in that Climate.

Aquin,—say the believers in *contagion*, “it is admitted that cold, damps, heat, &c. are the exciting causes of *Yellow Fever* ; but how is it, that the people of the surrounding country, or even of other parts of our City, are not affected by these causes, as are the people in the “*infected District*,” or those who had been near enough to it ?

The above propositions have, during thirty years, been made the main stay, and sheet-anchors of the ship importation and will

equal effect, have located the *domestic sewer*, and the "pestilential Church yard."

As these propositions assume for *fact*, that which requires proof, let us *once more*, ask the harder questions. Why is our fever always "*imported*" at a certain time of the year when ships and vessels are excluded? And why do "*pestilential*" Church Yards remain harmless all the year beside; and for many years in succession? Again—If there be a "*specific infection, or contagion*," how is it that, all those in or near the district, and specially our night and day watch, who are constantly in it, are not destroyed with it, common sense would say at once because there is no "*specific contagion!*" if there was, not one in five hundred would escape, whereas not one in five hundred are now affected by it. Would this be so, if small Pox or Measles were endemic, in that, or any other District? It would be rare if one person, in a *City*, should pass a life free from small Pox. If our fever searched so close for its victims, and to have it *once* was no exemption in future, it would never cease. Our species in either case must long since have become extinct, by small Pox alone!

Again—Very few died in the *infected District*. The people removed, or were ordered away. On 5th August the first death was officially reported; and on the 10th the people were commanded to remove. During the whole season, 364 cases were officially reported, and 119 deaths. Subsequent estimates, made the cases 411 and 240 deaths. It is estimated that not more than 8 or 10 died in the District; the rest died in various parts of the *City as usual*, though mostly *traced*, as having been, *so near to it as to imbibe the "pestilence."* The contact distance is not ascertained. The fences are no bounds in this respect. It is deemed not unreasonable that, from the necessary business, the full one half of our male population may have been *within* what the Theorists might deem the *tangible distance*. Hence most of the cases, and specially the *deaths*, are held to have been in contact with the "*reservoirs!*" This became *indispensable* to sustain the doctrine of a "*specific Contagion*," without which both systems,—*importation* and *domestic origin, must fall!* The pertinacity of the believers in contagion may be thus justly criticised without imputing to them an intentional perversion of fact, which is, by no means intended to be inferred.

Again—The constant developement of facts, of *untraced fever here*, and the intelligence from various parts of the country, and from distant States, both on the Atlantic, and inland, where no importation, is even pretended; and where the prevalence of a high Bilious, or *Yellow fever*, and like sudden deaths, as in this *City*, now also prevail, have greatly alarmed the theorists, as respects their several causes of origin.

Again.—On the main questions of "*contagion*," above stated, of why's and wherefores;—I beg further to state certain facts.—Viz. *Heaven always gives us fresh and not salt water rains*; and the *former only occasionally*. * *An excess of wet, salt or fresh, always*

* *The present rate . . . further to involve our city (already in an almost irrecoverable debt) through expensive works for the introduction of a greater*

produce a foul atmosphere, and the good people of Broadway and Greenwich street, and across Rector street, have, for several years past, caused it to rain *pickle* in their streets, daily taken from our docks and slips, of the salt river water, and specially so during a part of this our very hot summer. Cartmen are daily employed in this work. This practise has long been complained of, as offensive to people from other parts of the City. The unavoidable variety and particles of animal and vegetable matter, at all times in our streets, had thus been held in *daily street*, through the agency of a hot sun, on the heated pavements, and their combined effluvia together with the said *putrid pickle*, had become highly offensive! How far this agency may have added to the formation of the "*poison*" complained of in that *District* is left to the public to judge of. I only beg leave to state that, *from certain PUTRID PICKLE, contained in a few fish barrels, the fever was declared to have been IMPORTED in 1798!*

On this main branch of this important subject, permit me to make a short extract from my notes of 1805—viz.—“It is true, the fever has *always* commenced on the *East side* of the City, and generally where sailors resort and carouse when they come in port. From such *location*, its *importation* is inferred. May not the cold damp easterly winds generally prevalent at this season, and which first strike on the *east side* of our City, which also receives the rays of a hot sun earlier than on the north-west side, *be the cause?* I have frequently been under the necessity of buttoning my coat, in consequence of the chilling cold on the *east side*, when no such sensation was yet felt on the *north-west side*. I have this day (13th September 1805) experienced full proof of this fact.

In the present year, 1822, on or about the 23d, 24th, and 25th July, and shortly after the rains, the wind at North—“*Ice was formed at Albany as thick as a dollar,*” and seen here in several places. The fever was declared on the 31st July; and for the *FIRST TIME* on the *north side!* Our winds, damps, rains and chilling colds have been uniformly, from between the south and north points (westerly,) this whole season; and on every occasion of sudden change, from great heat to cold, our deaths, and new cases have more than doubled; as our daily reports testify; and such was the fact in 1798 and 1805, when the cold winds and damps were uniformly from the *East!*

It is feared, that so deep-rooted a pride of character, now involved, and to be affected in this thing, may seek to sustain itself, a little longer, by again reviving the almost exploded doctrine of “*Infection*” by personal contact with the sick; and thus charge and settle on our “*pestilential city*” all the contaminating consequences of the whole region, far and wide; and also of other States, and foreign climes, through “*infectious ships and travellers, who may*

abundance of fresh water into it, though of great utility, yet is respectfully believed that, *an excess of its use in our streets, in the hot seasons would prove to be highly injurious to the health of the City.*

have only passed by us, and subsequently became sick. Every distant case, of this kind, has been sought after by our theorists, and given in proof that, "our imported and local 'poison,' can be in the body for weeks, before it breaks out!" Woe be to the prosperity of our city if such doctrine shall prevail!

If this question of "a personal contagion by contact," with the sick must be again tested, let every possible inquiry, and experiment be made, as in 1805, and without any delay; that we may not lose one fact gained to truth in thirty years, if it be possible to sustain it, against such theorists.

If it chance to happen, which it rarely does, that more persons than one become sick in a family,—an "infectious contagion" is now instantly inferred. When, if the "virulent poison" described by our theorists, did exist, and the *whole family* not become infected by it, the circumstance would border on a miracle! If yellow fever be in a family, there is great agitation, and much unusual exposure both day and night in such family, naturally leading to the same *true causes* which produced it in the first instance. From every *FACT* in nature, lessons may be drawn productive of a thousand benefits, from every *ERROR*,—ten thousand evils.

Again, and lastly. If *HEAT* and *MOISTURE*, be among the agents of our calamity, the stench in the said streets, which were daily wet with salt water, ~~or~~ and both adjacent to *Trinity Church-Yard*! must have afforded far more rational cause, for *local fever*, than the "sewer" and the "sugar boxes," in the Infected District. It is pity, that the dry, peaceful and well covered skeletons in *Trinity Church Cemetery*, should have been superadded as causing contagion; as not one of them ever stirred an inch beyond their dovetailed coffins; except perhaps, when disturbed by our old respectable sextons, *VANHOOK* and *COLLISTER*, now also among them, and who had lived as well in vaults, as among *these dead*, and at all seasons, for, perhaps, fifty years, in prime health, and good condition! That these skeletons should now be charged, as *active agents*, in the formation of a most deleterious gas, or poisonous mixture in the air, and destructive to human life,—indeed is pity! But that the said artificial steam and stench, by salt water, on the heated pavement, and made by the living, should now render our dead ancestors (and ourselves shortly) detestable to their living progeny, is doubly wrong! That the "substance of these skeletons had through length of time, saturated the earth, and now penetrated through the stone wall," of that cemetery (about twelve feet high) and also that, the "poison" had sunk down into the earth, about twenty feet below the said wall, and thence extended itself about five hundred feet towards the river, and had there regained the surface at the intersections of *Washington* and *Rector streets*, and from thence began its ravages;—such "*domestic origin*" would seem rather incredible of belief. The near inhabitants, whose windows, when opened, swing into the said church-yard, deny even any tainted effluvia at *any time*. A rich and beautiful grass-green carpet appears every

year, and renews the covering of the *sacred surface*; and I have no objections to admit, that this is formed by the agency of our dead ancestors. Their work is now in "ever-green," and is displayed in the *earliest spring* and *latest autumn*; and in a due succession. It is always seen *above ground*, and is never found brewing mischief, in the dark region of "pestilence," in the earth beneath!

About seven months after the death of a relative, who died in full flesh, and weighed about three hundred weight,—I went into the vault, and no stench was perceived, nor osings through his coffin. Nine-tenths of those that die are mere skin and bone; and it is ascertained that in about twenty-five years, the very bones are mostly decayed, much less the sinews and cartilages retain putrefaction.

Abandoning all suppositions, none will deny that, the *common affections* of cold operating on heated bodies, produce fever, every where; and if in any case, they produce bilious, or *yellow fever*, which "four-fifths" of the doctors now declare to be one and the same thing,—we have, at least, *one cause of its origin through known facts!*

Gentlemen, I have not studied system, not intending to write a treatise on Yellow Fever; but again to employ my leisure moments as on former occasions, in seeking for truth, on that important subject.

Nothing is more distant from my intention, than to attach blame to any one; the high character of our Physicians, is far beyond my praise or censure. Nor is it intended to treat this subject with levity. Our constituted authorities have a hard task to perform, in the execution of our existing (and *truly imported*) Quarantine laws which originated in the old world and is here copied from the "mere fabric of a vision;" on a *supposed transportable "specific contagion," either imported, or of local origin, or both!* This law commands that our Physicians shall report, under a heavy penalty, all cases of "pestilential diseases, or contagious fever;" and also enjoins that, your honorable Body shall give publicity to such reports! Therefore, while the said law shall continue as it now stands, (our main cause of excitement) the belief in a "specific contagion" will remain; which, with the now declared "impossibility to distinguish, in most cases between a bilious and yellow fever," will enable a few men of the Faculty of Physic, by mistakes in these cases, and acting conscientiously too, to occasion the depopulation of our city, *every year*, and in little more time than it would require a like number to destroy it by conflagration! Is it not true that since the quarantine law, we date the frequency of our "infectious fever?"

If sixty or eighty persons did not die weekly, among one hundred and thirty thousand, living together within the compass of *eight or ten miles*, and where, in the usual season of fevers, many cases of *high bilious fever*.....do, at all times exist;—the exemption from such fever among us, would be rare indeed, in the register of our deaths. Who does not see the great danger from the mistakes of our best Physicians?

Our diseases may be somewhat different from those of the country, owing to our local position, as surrounded with an excess of moisture. Our dry hot weather is always healthy. That previous disease, the *dysentery*, is rarely with us; though in the surrounding country is generally prevalent, and frequently endemic in certain districts. From what I know and fully believe, that affliction generally, is also the effect of *sudden cold on heated bodies*. The farmer and his workmen, are daily seen sitting on the cold ground in a state of full heat;—lying on the grass and sleeping in like situations; and on returning home, after a laborious day's work, putting their feet and legs in cold well water for the purpose of cleansing themselves, &c. These causes also slay their thousands.

As respects our Quarantine laws, they must vanish, when ever we shall resolve, no longer to affright ourselves with the *importation of ideal plagues and poisons*! To me it appears, they may now be so far eased off, as to admit all healthy persons, on their arrival, and after examination, to proceed without delay to the city; and, perhaps, certain other of its most rigid provisions, might, with perfect safety be mitigated. It is by no means now intended to abolish them at once. Let them have further trial; though I should oppose an increased rigour in them, as highly injurious. If, however, it be conceded (as innumerable facts prove) that no danger is to be apprehended by the *healthy* from the *really sick with yellow fever*, what evil then can result from a direct communication at least with the healthy from abroad? It is feared, nevertheless, that, on this subject, the cry will yet be *loud and long*—“Great is the Goddess Diana!”

With respect to the beautiful palace we inhabit, (in which each person and family have their several apartments and walking grounds) and whose acute-angular point, opens, in full view, of one of the finest bays and harbours in the world; and is washed, on each side by two noble rivers;—I say, as respects this *grand Palace*, a law ought to be enacted to effect its entire cleanliness. Every avenue, and every department of it, ought to be held subject to the most rigid inspection, and cleansed accordingly. Not a single slut, if such an one shall be found, should be left at rest, until her family and apartments were cleansed.

AN OLD CITIZEN.

NO. III.

AUGUST 26, 1822.

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH.

IN my addresses Nos. 1 and 2, to your honorable Body, it is deemed to be substantiated beyond controversy, that from the constant changes and various *affections* of the air, in which we live, move and have a being, are derived generally, both our *bane and its antidote*; our life and death. That from excessive heat, sudden colds, chilling damps, rains, and a foul atmosphere, acting

diseased, fatigued, overheated, or overloaded bodies, a fever is generated, and especially so in this season of the year, none will deny. Nor will it be denied, that if these affections, (or "infections," if it must be so) of the atmosphere, in any case, produce Yellow Fever, we have, at least, *one source of its origin*,—without any *doubts* about it, and through *known causes*! This, I humbly trust, will be further substantiated by a concatenation of *incontestable facts*.

True indeed, say the theorists, both of foreign and domestic origin, "these *heats, damps, and colds*, are the necessary, immediate and exciting causes; but there must be a previous infection of something else!!!". Now, without any equivocation or mental reservation, I pray that these Gentlemen (whose theories do not differ as much as they think they do, in evil tendency to our city,) will, and without *guessing at it*, but through some sound medium of plain language and common sense, so to explain to our understandings, what this "previous infection" is, which specially produces Yellow Fever? It seems that "Doctors disagree!" And I have been led to run the rounds after it for about thirty years; and hope and trust, not in vain, at least so far, as to guard *myself*, and to warn others, against certain known causes of the evil amongst us; and therefore deeming it reasonable of belief that, between the latitudes of 41 and 42, south and north, around the whole globe, the same evils prevail, under somewhat different forms, though from like causes, and ought to be guarded in like manner; including all plagues and pestilences within the above boundary lines.

This said "It" has heretofore been declared to be *invisible*, and only known by its effects; but is now positively said to be a "*most deleterious and poisonous animalcule*;" which is about to be rendered visible by certain microscopes to magnify about ten thousand times. These glasses, it is confidently *supposed*, will afford to our *vision*, at least, the *probable* existence of these "pestilential, contagious, and poisonous animals" and of *certainty*, will, so far discover them, as to give fair grounds for future discussion and improvement!

Traps have been set near Rector-street for these animalcule. One of them was caught in a glass of prepared wine, and exposed by the General concerned in these experiments, but soon disappeared from its *extreme minuteness*; though small black wings had been *distinctly marked*, as described by the *sailor*, to have existed in Spain during the plague!

Whatever this said ideal "*poison*," is, or is not, it must be a *harmless something*, whether a gas or animalcule; as its "*deleterious sluggish quality*," is acknowledged to require some one, or *all the exciting causes* of heat cold &c, to bring our bodies into a proper state of *PREDISPOSITION* for its active effect. I do therefore, *most earnestly intreat* your honorable body, and my fellow citizens, *to avoid all those sudden heats and colds*, as the best means of *safety for the present*. The rules of right reasoning (or as some would say "*philosophizing*") admit of no more causes being assigned than *are necessary to prove a fact*. Our theorists by attempting to

prove every thing, destroy their best testimony. In the present case, what is the use, even of supposing this "poisonous infection," when the plain and palpable effects of cold suddenly acting on heated bodies, now daily produce Yellow Fever without it? That such is the case, let *fact* be submitted to a candid world.

The lately deceased Colonel Thomas De Russy, of this city, a West Indian by birth, and of long habitation there, and here, and of undoubted veracity, and intelligence, stated to me, in 1805, (and his observations were then noted by me)—"that he found the same causes of fever here, as in the West Indies; and said, that a ship arrived in the afternoon at the Cape in St. Domingo, from Boston, and in the evening he was at a public house where the captain, mate, supercargo, and others belonging to the ship, were carousing. The evening was hot, and the ceiling of the house low,—that the captain seized the table with all its Bacchanalian apparatus and removed it into the open air. My informant, seeing their danger, said to them, "if we who are accustomed to this climate, were to act thus, we would die with the Yellow Fever!" This warning was disregarded, and *five* of the company died within *ten days*! No "previous infection" on these people from Boston, could yet have been had; certainly *none* was wanting to complete this case of sudden deaths by improper exposure to the chilling damps of a night atmosphere. Fifty other cases from testimony equally conclusive have been detailed to me.

Had the West Indians possessed but a small portion of the sagacity of my friend Doctor Coleman, and his associates, and had "traced" this case, they might, with equal force of argument, have fixed the importation of Yellow Fever to the West Indies from Boston; particularly if any person had subsequently died who had been on board that ship!

Indeed, the fever now raging in Catalonia, in Old Spain, is alleged to have been imported there from the United States. This cannot be strange, while these afflicted and superstitious people, read our daily journals of a most dire 'pestilence,' now raging in New York. No doubt, some of our ships have arrived there. We must become famous for the *exportation* of this deadly malady, as we so frequently *advertise* its *importation* and its *domestic manufacture* also!

It is strange that we have had commerce for about two hundred years with the West Indies,—with the most pestilential parts of Africa and Europe, and perhaps Asia, and have never discovered the importation of this mortal disease until about 1793; and what is still more strange, that, during all this time, no evil effects were ever before discovered from it. It is pity, that our theorists had not left us in our "stupid security," and themselves alone had become illustrated!

In a conversation held with an American of intelligence, a few days since, on this subject, who had been more than twelve years in succession in the West Indies; he confirmed Col. De Russy's observations, and *facts*, and said that, the transitions from excessive heat,

sudden squalls of chilling rain, which were again succeeded by an increased hot sun, would not, on some occasions, exceed fifteen minutes ; and that these changes there, are far more frequent than with us. That the blacks, who daily work in the hot sun, and are in a constant perspiration, always watch, as with eagle's eye, those cold clouds of rain, and scud for shelter, as if flying for their lives. If they are caught in the rain, chills follow, they generally sicken, and frequently die in a few days. If they avoid the wet, (for which many of them have the means near them) they return to their labour again in the hot sun with impunity. My informant added, that the West Indians avoid the night damps, and a sudden check of the perspiration, with the utmost solicitude. (as some of our Doctors do here :) *One such fact alone ought to bear down a thousand theories!*

Is it not probable, that the late mortality among the crews of our ships of war, in the Gulph of Mexico, and on the West India station generally, was occasioned by causes similar to the above ?— Does not this idea of a chymical "*poison*," now about thirty years conjectured to be generated in the hold of these vessels, still remain void of *one solid proof*? Or will it be deemed more rational, that the calamity was peddled on board "in a bundle of old clothes from the Havana," or else where? Can such like *brain-fever causes*, continue much longer to shade the public mind, and hold it in direct opposition to common sense and known fact? The crew of the Enterprise are known to have committed the most extravagant excesses and debaucheries when she arrived in port, and *after which*, and not before, so many of them sickened and died. The very timbers of that fated ship is now doomed to bear the blame!

It cannot be expected that our naval officers, and men, are yet trained to the precautions of our coasting ships and vessels trading with the West India islands. The Yankee coasters drink their molasses and water,—watch time and prepare for the danger consequent on these sudden squalls of cold rain. We hear of no comparative mortality among their crews.

The great heat and sudden cold showers, above mentioned, no doubt prevail in those seas, or near the coasts, and should be carefully watched in time, to prevent our sailors from the heating effects of great exertion to secure the ship, perhaps in a gust, from danger. Ourseamen, while in full perspiration, become drenched with these rains; and again, in a few minutes, must meet the hot rays of a scorching sun, with their bodies charged to the brim, with heating and poisonous liquors, instead of the cooling molasses draught! In this state of body their *labour ceases*, when on the *penalty of life*, nature demands its *continuance*! These men are always exposed to sudden exertion, and occasional *hard fatigue*, and to *instant cessation* from such labour. In such cases of sudden cessation from labour their over-coats should instantly be put on. *In open sea, it is not so dangerous, because the air is uniform; but when connected with the changeableness of a land atmosphere proves fatal; and must continue so to do, until the true cause*

shall be had and observed with due care. Let a strict order from government experiment to redeem the fatal evil, by a command that, on board our ships, both a day and night register of the weather, and the effects of its changeableness on the ship's company should be kept. In such case, *facts* would soon take the lead of *theories*, and speak a language not to be misunderstood nor disputed by *idle suppositions*.

Night damps, and especially sleeping in them, on deck, must be highly dangerous. If sailors be led to believe (and it would now be almost a miracle if they were not) that "contagion is constantly generating in their ships and vessels," is it not probable, that many of them may rush into almost certain death, by a frequent abandonment of their safe hammocks, in the hot seasons through such belief? If they were covered on deck, as with a soldier's tent, in the hot weather, it would be advantageous. The greater danger to our sailors is, when they come in port; from their night debaucheries, and exposure to the chilling damps. Witness the ship's company from Boston above stated. If these death proclaiming *causes* and *facts*, avail not,—neither would a voice from among the dead!

If our ships of war, and others, were provided with tubs for warm bathing, and the general application on the Sudorific practice, as now observed in the West Indies, the effects, no doubt, would be most salutary. After all applications of warm bath, to guard against the subsequent cold air, is all important. To this end, if the entire body, and especially the exposed parts of it, be rubbed with a cloth saturated in almost any kind of spirit, first *warmed*, it would be a sure preventive of injury from the cold air after bathing.—From a neglect of this practice, of sheathing the pores, I have frequently been injured, rather than benefitted by warm bath.

If persons in delicate health were thus to apply, once or twice a week, a small portion, of about two-thirds spirits, and one-third water, warmed, and rub it under their arm-pits and throat, and the bottoms of their feet, it would not be long before its beneficial effects would be felt and acknowledged, in warding off the effects of cold, and catarrh, which so frequently destroy life both in winter and summer.—About six years of my life (between the age of twenty-seven and thirty-three) has been passed in a dubious state of health, and its apprehended consequences; to the above practice is attributed, in heaven's providence, an almost uninterrupted health; but my old preventive of evil, is now frequently neglected, though sometimes not with impunity.

During thirty years has the public mind been led to roam in the regions of alternate doubt and despair, about this "previous infection;" and not yet is there a single purpose gained. Ship-loads of poison are still *conceived of*, and more than ever, as contaminating the air, and almost every foreign article of commerce introduced for our *comfort* is viewed with suspicion. Hopeless preventives are yet sought, in various forms of *Quarantine*; when, at this late day, it may be asked, and with great propriety,—"where is the

single proof that one of them, or all of them put together, have resulted in the establishment of one beneficial known fact, as respects Yellow Fever?

The dead are now deemed, or at least suspected, as conspiring against the living; and the most trifling decomposition of matter, is made to portay death by plague and pestilence; and all to sustain certain theories!

We now frequently find men, otherwise sane, learned, wise and sensible, declare their *belief* of the "virulence of the infective matter, that a portion of it of the size of a nutmeg, the full of a wine-glass, or even an infected vest or night cap, would be sufficient to contaminate the entire atmosphere of our city with its deadly poison!"

Such are a few of the draughts now daily made on our credulity, and all destitute of a single known *fact*, as respects the contagion or infection of Yellow Fever. The public reason has become spoiled through the mazes of dubious conjecture on this subject.—They are all of European origin, and by repetition here, have become ours by adoption. Let us dare to seek for truth from the fountains of unerring providence. In such case we should only have our own errors to redeem from evil, in physics, as we now have learned to help ourselves in government.

The Legislatures of several of our States have, one after another, yielded to the practice on the imported Quarantine laws, on a like case of mere hypothesis. We have tried them more than thirty years; the result of the knowledge they have afforded need not be repeated; and we may now be permitted, at least to *doubt* their utility, and begin a reasonable investigation. They are said to have been introduced "of ancient time," to prevent the spread of leprosy, and that well known contagious disease the Small Pox. Certain fevers, called plague, in the old world, were next added, as also "contagious." This has been affirmed and denied for more than two thousand years. We entered the vortex of disputation about thirty years ago; and our "*exciting causes*," our "*predisposing causes*," and "*previous infections*," bid fair to continue the contest two thousand years to come; unless we should dare to—

"Take nature's path, and mad opinion's leave!"

Then,

"All states can reach it, and all heads conceive."

AN OLD CITIZEN.

NO. IV.

SEPTEMBER 13, 1822.

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH,

IN No. 3, certain causes were exhibited of the prevalence of a high bilious or Yellow fever, generally, in the middle latitudes, and with us in 41, being the same. The fact was brought to your

recollection, that the people of Broadway, Greenwich street and across Rector-street (and perhaps other streets where fever has most prevailed this season) had also caused unnatural daily showers of *salt water from our docks*, into those streets. That from this excess of moisture, the heat was increased, instead of lessened through a constant steam daily kept up from the hot pavements.

A Physician of the *domestic origin* belief, and of high chymical talent, said to me that, if a red hot pig of Iron was thrown into a tub of *salt water*, in a close room,—that *STEAM would, produce Yellow fever!!!* If so the *domestic origin* in the “infected district” is demonstrated, leaving the church yard out of the question.

That these causes may have added to the effects of fever in that district ; though not deemed absolutely necessary to its existance. That sudden cold acting on diseased, overheated and fatigued bodies, are the *main agents* of fever *every where* ; and frequently produce speedy death, by *Yellow fever*, and in the *purest atmosphere*: These positions will be further illustrated by *facts*.

In 1798, on the morning of the 14th August, this City was enveloped in a cloud of water. There had been previous rains and several deaths by fever in July. Thousands of cellars were then filled, streets excavated, and the docks overflowed. This deluge was succeeded alternately by hot gleams of sun, chilling damps, and rains for about five weeks. Many persons kept fires in their houses as a drier. The state of the weather, as then observed daily, I have lately seen in possession of the Honorable Richard Riker, which prove the fact to be as above stated ; and also that our fevers have, uniformly commenced, either earlier or later, as the rains were so in each year of fever since.

In that year, all the main elements of fever, viz. heat, cold, excessive moisture and the consequent rapid decay of all perishable matter, were united. Three of the four elements were almost in a constant fever ; and our cellars emitted a noxious effluvia, offensive to every person. The most severe Epidemic, or rather endemic fever, we have yet had, was the result, as it had previously been, in the year 1793 in Philadelphia, and in some particulars, from like causes ;—though it is said that great heat, a long drought, and sudden colds were mostly prevalent in Philadelphia in 1793.

That *war of the elements* and the consequent deaths in 1798, amongst us, was then, and has ever since been charged, by the believers in the importation of “contagion,” either to certain *hides* from Cuerocoa, or a few barrels of spoiled *fish* in a putrid pickle ! But what could such a quantity of effluvia affect with evil, or even with inconvenience, to a single sense, after being exposed for *sixty minutes* to the rapid and mighty revoltings, and convolvings of our earth, and its atmosphere, both in their diurnal and annual flight in the great circle of the Ecliptic ? It was then also proved, though of no avail, with the importing theorists,—that the persons who handled and removed those nuisances, did so with *impunity, as our night and day watch, now continued in good health in the “infected District.”* Our “poisoned atmosphere,” goes

north slowly. South hurricanes scarcely move it. The impress on deaths is certain to be fixed, on all *traceable cases* with the District.

In 1800, the rains began about the 15th July; fever followed earlier that year. The heat was generally prevalent, with occasional sudden cold, and damps of short duration. Perishable matter was held, at longer intervals, in a dry state, and prevented from rapid putrefaction, through an excess of moisture either salt or fresh. The fever was mild and of short duration that year.

In 1805, if I mistake not (my notes of that year are not at hand) the rains began and fever followed about the first of July; the atmosphere presented a marked affinity to that of 1798. Our fever, that year, was far more severe, and of longer duration than in 1800.

In the present year 1822, an extreme drought of about six weeks, was followed by a succession of fine rains, and clear sky alternately, from the latter end of June to about the middle of July. Our winds and rains have, almost wholly, been between the south and north points, westerly, as yet, during this season, all these rains were mild, void of cold, and succeeded by a hot, though clear sky, and totally unlike 1798 and 1805. The highly remarkable occurrence this present year was the sudden change to extreme cold, on or about the 23d 24th and 25th of July, with the wind *strong at north*, and the subsequent death of Mrs. Philips about *nine days thereafter*. Mrs. Philips was the first case publicly reported, and she removed from the vicinity of Rector street on the 30th, in consequence of previous rumors of fever in that neighbourhood. It is said that, on one of the above days, ice was formed in several places. This sudden cold was not accompanied by rain, though, not many days thereafter the symptoms of the Yellow fever were declared at the corner of Rector and Greenwich streets! The first time that the fever has been charged as originating on this side of the City!

Nothing before nor since has occurred unusually remarkable except certain intervals of cold days and nights, and a succession of much heat, a calm and dry air (except the said artificial salt water rains) and a consequent *free flow of the perspiration*, which always affords the *highest health*; though at the same time renders us the *more liable* to sudden colds, and requires that great care be observed and taken, in this season of the year, from the most trifling variations of the atmosphere, when our bodies are in that state.*

Thus we see when the highest excitement of health is promoted, and the pores of the body expanded through a free and regular perspiration, that same "*excitement*" becomes the highest point of "*predisposition*," or cause, which renders us most susceptible of the evil, and places the cup of death nearest at hand!—A young man in such a state of body, this season, is said to have plunged into our North-River bath, and died in six days; and was reported a *high case of Yellow Fever*!—But, say the theorists, there must

* I am at this moment, surprised to have recapitulated, the weather of 1800, to be nearly the same as the present, 1822.



have been a "previous infection!"—No doubt, this young man, like all the rest of us, "at the moment of his breath received the lurking principle of death." This "previous infection" is the true point of **INSANITY** among the theorists!

I never knew the weather so pleasant in August and, as yet, in September in my life; excepting a few cold days and nights, which were always followed by an increase of deaths, and new cases, as our daily reports prove; and which become to my understanding, *irresistible* evidence of the true cause of our calamity; and at the same instant present, to common sense and observation, the most clear and selfevident preventives of it. As far as it may be in our power, then let us guard against the extremes of heat and cold in this critical season of the year when the "dog-star rages." (See note.) Nothing new is brought to light by these facts. A knowledge of the changeableness of the atmosphere, as connected with the history of diseases, is as old as the creation; and we are only endeavouring to come back to known truth, from a long and painful excursion among the quick-sands and Cobwebs of error. It is agreed on all hands that the cause is in the *atmosphere*; but how do the several theorists account for it? Why, they suppose the atmosphere to be charged, and in a certain season of the year only with an imported, or domestic "specific poison," which communicates Yellow fever, by being inhaled into the body, through the mouth or nostrils; though perfectly harmless, except when excited by a check of the perspiration; and at the same time admit, that they have no positive knowledge of such fact; nor what that "specific contagion" is!

From daily conversations among the theorists, it is evident, that the doctrine of a personal contagion is strongly attempted to be revived. The bodies of the *sick*, *the dying* and *dead*, having been forced, by the public sense, to be yielded as *noncontagious*, though the, *hold on their garment-skirts*, has never been given up, as freed from the "pestilence," with which those bodies had saturated them! It may be erroneous, but I think, the fabric of Yellow fever contagion is shortly doomed to be seen in ruins only.

On this important branch of the subject, I once again beg leave, further to copy from my notes of 1805.—Viz.—This fever is said to be a poison, communicable one from an other like the small Pox.—For God's sake where is the proof? I venture to say, it cannot be maintained in a single instance, without resorting to the quibbles of hypothetical reasoning; but the contrary position is sustained by thousands of *demonstrated facts*. All the officers of the health department, medical men, (in 1798 several of them died in consequence of the new practice.) A host of nurses attendant on the sick. The man of Potter's field, who with impunity daily intered the dead, when the black vomit &c. (as the dark dregs, charges from the stomach are terrifically called) and other substances, by *jolting on the Herse-Carts*, oozed through the unjointed coffins; and frequently run over his hands and clothes, which he then *shew me on his frock*; and said that his wife repeatedly wash-

them in hot soap suds, with equal impunity. This man held his station for years.—Dissections were then had on subjects of the most malignant kind, and that too in a stage of putrifaction prodigiously offensive ; at one of them (in 1805) I was present ;" such facts had at one time annihilated the doctrine of personal contagion.

No dessections are now heard of, or critical investigations pursued. All observations seem now lost in the regions of physical mysticism. To have been in, or any way near the "District," stops inquiry—yellow fever in such cases is generally proclaimed.

In the Small Pox, the symptoms are said to be always alike, and contagious at all times, and in any atmosphere. In our fever the symptoms are declared to be, by our best physicians—"so dissimilar, and unsteady, in our infectious Yellow Fever as *nine times out of ten*, to render it *impossible* to distinguish between it and our billious fevers !" All of which are decidedly declared to be *non-contagious* ! On such wire drawn distinctions, the mind cannot fix any rational identity. Is it intended to be understood that, this said secret miasma, or poison in our atmosphere, avoids association with our billious cases, and only forms Yellow Fevers ? This sublime conception of the theorists, must be referred back to them, for further elucidation.

To plain *facts* the utmost publicity should be afforded ; and in a special manner at their crisis, when almost every social tie seems, *more than ever*, about to be abandoned, through false excitements, useless and unmanly fears. Why are old dead citizens (if their bodies be not contagious) deprived of their legitimate spot of earth, and hurried, before they are cold, into Potters-field, which, as of old, was only intended "to bury strangers in." It is this "contagion," this "pestilence," and "previous infection," of, at most, *a mere ideal chimera* !

If this current of belief (once nearly exploded) be not again stayed by the force of reason and observation, founded on experience and *fact* alone, the casuists may again benight this *one solitary truth*, believed to have been established ; and once more deprive us of the means of self-preservation arising from our own courage, and the enlightened aid of others, in our combat with the common fevers of our climate, which may become epidemic, or exist in few instances only. Our summer and fall fevers are rarely so general as they have already become this season, on our whole sea board, and also in the *interior*.

I have a news-paper this moment before me, which says,— "The Physicians of Virginia have pronounced the disease now prevailing in some of the Counties, bordering on James' River, to be Yellow Fever." Like information is received from the far inland States of Ohio, Kentucky, and from many and various parts of the country at this time.

Do these people proclaim a contagion, or charge the evil to importation from other climes ? The inhabitants of these climes always, and for two thousand years, have, and continue to retort the charge with indignation. *Tunis repels the charge made by the Algerines,*

of its importation from among them ; and Algiers retorts on the Morea, and the whole line of the Levant and Archipelago, and Constantinople ;—who altogether reprobated the city of Marseilles in 1720, and the city of Seville in 1804 for charging them, or either of them, as the *origin of their calamities* ; during the several great plagues which had prevailed in these cities ! I think it was the afflicted people of Marseilles, in 1720, who at length, discovered “*the fact*,” that a Crow, *from the southern shores of the Mediterranean*, had been shot in the city of Marseilles, and the boys had distributed its feathers amongst them ; *and from that very spot the plague commenced* !—Thank our western stars that, none of our causes of origin, in 1822, exceed in absurdity that of Marseilles, 102 years ago ! We also now pay severely for like charges of origin, throughout Europe, and perhaps Africa and Asia, in rigid counteracting quarantine prohibitions. The West Indians have become too wise, even to notice it. Our intercourse is frequently interdicted with our sister cities, and predicated on the *idea* of a *transportable contagion* ; when, at the same time, all declare (*in words*) its entire inability of communication from the *body* of the sick to the healthy ; but that, “*sick persons clothes contain the contagion*” when taken off their bodies ! and thus it may be transported to any distance, provided they be well boxed up !

Here the fever is proved, not to be contagious out of the *atmosphere* of our “Infected District ;” yet is held to be imported from Districts three and four thousand miles distant, if “infected,” as our district is now advertised to be. When, at Greenwich, about a mile from our “district,” and with a constant intercourse, and a transportation of goods of every kind and quality, and now daily taken out of our *district atmosphere* ; yet the said fever *fails of transportation* ; and becomes entirely neutralized and *harmless* !—When will miracles cease ? It is to our long habit of associating the *virulence* of Small Pox matter of contagion with our Yellow Fever, which now forms the *insane point* in this subject. Where the people two thousand, or even thirty years, in finding out if small pox or measles were contagious ?

The extreme susceptibility of our atmosphere, to become impregnated with the poison, both at home, and from abroad, as daily represented, would in all ordinary cases, become evidence, at least, of its *homogeneous quality* with our city climate. Of one thing we may rest assured,—that at all times when we shall *advertise* to have *imported* it, or to have it on hand of *domestic manufacture*, the world will never fail to charge the *re-exportation* of it, to our account !

Many believe it to be injurious to our city prosperity to acknowledge the native generation of this fever to be of our climate. This I have no hesitation in saying is an error in judgment, on the great scale of *interest itself* ; and if *untrue*, is highly dishonorable ; such cover must always be “*too large to hide itself*.”

I have the following narrative from an undoubted source, that about ten days ago, a merchant, from the western part of this State,

came to Greenwich (about one mile from our city, and where our merchants have retired) and while purchasing goods was running about in constant agitation, and thus "exciting" the only known cause or "predisposition" to the evil effect. His handkerchief was repeatedly held to his nose,—and he slept on board a sloop through fear of our said contagion. That on his hasty return, he arrived as far as Utica, in this State, and there died.—That this occurrence occasioned several other merchants, on their way here for a like purpose, to return home, and venture no nearer to our "pestilential city" than Utica.

AN OLD CITIZEN.

NOTE.—The dog-star rises and sets with the sun from about the 30th July until the 10th or 15th September; and this time is called *the dog-days*. Certain theorists of the old world, have noticed, and applied the *redness, paleness* or other *hue*, of that star, as certain indications of *plagues* and *pestilences*. As none of our theorists here have yet noticed any such analogies, I beg leave to state *a fact*.—That during these *Dog-Days*, our greatest height of fever, and deaths, have generally occurred. And again, that a single thunder shower has then been known to spoil fresh meats in a few hours, and also to expedite death, by putrefaction, in high stages of our fever. This is certainly atmospheric affection; the appearances of the dog-star notwithstanding.

NO. V.

SEPTEMBER 17, 1822.

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH,

IN No 4, the variations of weather, in a few of the previous years of fever, were contrasted with the present; also, proofs of non-contagion from contact, or care of the sick were adduced.

I now again beg leave to make a few further extracts from my notes of 1805; and select the following example among many others of that year.—"My friend informed me that our neighbour Southerland, near the Bear-Market, had died of yellow fever, after *three day's illness*; and he had asked Mrs. Southerland, if her husband had taken cold? Her answer was, No.—I went immediately to the house, and asked the same question, and received a like answer. But inquired particularly respecting the conduct, or situation of her husband, soon before he became sick?—You say he was taken down on Sunday before noon,—where was he on Saturday and Friday, &c.? From these inquiries she was led to reflection, and said that, on Friday night, one of the children was very ill, and her husband was frequently out of bed, and twice in the yard undressed;—that the last time he was into the yard it was break of day, and he split her some oven-wood, as no persons were stirring; and when he came in, his shoulders and back were a little wet with a drizly rain! And that he began to complain the same day (Saturday,)—went to his bed on Sunday, and died on the following Friday in the forenoon; somewhat more than *seven days* (*in the stead of three*) after performing the laborious work of *splitting oven-wood in the rain and undressed!*"

My said friend was so dissatisfied with the history of Southerland's case, that he went and satisfied himself. This friend, subsequently died, and from a similar cause of "*atmospheric infection*," by a severe cold, taken in this portentous time in our year.

We frequently take colds, of which ourselves can give no account. Certainly no "*specific contagion*" seems wanting to complete a full knowledge and final effect, in the case of Southerland. Similar results, and answers from like inquiries for nearly thirty years, *satisfy me*.

It is acknowledged that, this said ideal something must always have *cold* and *heat* to give it *effect*; if then, simple cold acting on heated bodies is *proved* to produce *death* by *yellow fever*, any other "*infection*" must be intirely useless! Again, whatever may be frightfully depicted of sudden deaths, in this season of the year, it will be found, that, from *seven* to *nine* and *ten* days, after the first attacks, of *the most violent cases* death usually follows, and very rarely before.

Dr. Hosack, in the same year, 1805, started the phantom and called it "*poison*." He then, with great energy, (which this year seems to fail him,) chased the spectre latitudinally and longitudinally, in the Zenith and the Nadir,—in the usual fever Ecliptic, and in its diurnal rotations; and thousands are now daily seen in chase of the same phantom! The Doctor, however, then became giddy headed from its strange and unaccountable *circular movements*; now *traced, in steady step*, and in *straight lines*, up Broadway, towards our new Hall. It has yet failed to arrive at that point, and all who take it, must be *traced* to have been below that place. In the round-way, however, the Doctor pursued his *ignis-fatus*, in 1805, until he discovered every of its movements to be *interminable*, without beginning or end; when he yielded the chase after Yellow Fever "*science*"—in this way, and, in short breath, declared that the, old nurses "*Boneset and Cutnip-teas*," were preferable to "*lime-water*," and would ultimately be the death of it; and I have no hesitation to say, that such is my belief.

The Doctor in his recently republished letter of 1819, officially yeilds the palm of "*science*" to the old nurses and unlettered men, in yellow fever cases. One of them he names, viz. Richard Underhill, and calls him another "*Howard*." He now also, recommends, generally (and when medical aid is not at hand) the old "*sudorific*" practice, of sweating by warm bathings, and bitter teas, and emetics, if the stomach indicate nausea, or sickness, and purges if the bowels be painful. This, to my mind, is genuine practice, and "*within the reach of every body*;" and such as I, and no doubt the Doctor also, would immediately resort to; being the precise way in which such cases were treated previous to 1793 by the old nurses in cases of sudden colds. *To a departure from this practice we owe all its additional evils!*

The Doctor remarks at the close of his said letter, thus—"Allow me to add this truth, however humiliating it may be to the pride of

rience, and I mention it in *confirmation* of the *good effects* of this comparatively, *mild treatment* in the Yellow Fever of 1798!"

The Doctor having run the rounds of Yellow Fever "*science*," nothing now remains to prevent that gentleman, in his *life-time*, from becoming far more eminent in his profession than he now is, except his *pretended* adhesion to the old fallacy of an "*imported contagious poison*." His posthumous fame, is now also daily endangered, from a delay to acknowledge the *endigenous* character of our fever, to be, and only to originate from the changeableness of the atmosphere. Surely after coming back to the old mode of treating it, nothing can now, and in fact, be wanting, except the *sign Manual*, to preserve consistency. The theories on contagion form a laborious part of the study of physic. It is therefore probable that gentlemen of the Faculty may become misled from the multiplicity of theories holding contagion to exist in plagues, and Yellow Fevers:—We have suffered greatly, heretofore, from a wrong management through false hypothesis, and from a misconception of its being a *distinct disease* among us, either by importation, or of domestic generation.

Although we now decry a personal contagion, *in words*, the idea has become interwoven with our minds and thoughts for more than thirty years. How can it be otherwise, when if any case (all of which passes the strictest ordeal) now fail of being traced direct to the district origin, our theoretic reporters state—"the patient to have visited the sick, been attendant on them, or aided in their removal to the hospital" &c. &c! Thus avowing to the world a danger from *personal contagion*, as well as from a *poisoned atmosphere*.

How do our . . . medical men, so generally remain exempt from this "*contagious atmosphere*," when—*daily breathing it*, and even in contact with the "*foul clothing*," not to mention the putrid bodies of the sick, the dying and the dead, both in and out of the "*infected District*?" Some say, it is because they had become used to the "*poisonous misasma*;" but how was it, when they *first began to be used to it*? This said contagion requires a constant succession of miracles to sustain it. I would as soon charge our Physicians with satanic protection, like Doctor Faustus, as with a "*secret preventive unrevealed to us*," as some imagine. *Non-CONTAGION is the fact, and the only secret about it!*

Healthy persons arriving from abroad, are detained at Quarantine, for fear they may contaminate our Atmosphere; when if the same persons were sick of the fever, no danger need be apprehended by the *healthy* in their attendance on them. Here we see the *arm* of our *health laws* keeping back the true knowledge of a better experience.

Into such Labyrinths, and puzzling *inconsistencies*, have we been *led*, and never shall cease to be held, until one fell-swoop is made, of the *entire fabric* of the wicker-work with which we have been *enfolding ourselves* for thirty years, and which has now nearly *despised us of all our old common sense* on this subject. To your hon-

orable Body, and the Faculty attendant on your Board, the people look for correct information, founded on facts, only.

If the result of inquiries, as above stated in the case of Southerland, and all others, were ordered to be made, and reported to your honorable Body by the Faculty, instead of so great pertinacity to identify every case with the *ideal* District,—it is respectfully believed that, the present impenetrable cloud of mystery would long since have vanished before the day light of a right reason, into the dark abodes of its original nothingness.

Again—The diseases which man is heir to, prevail alternately, in all climates, and districts, and more in one year than another, over the whole globe. When any disease is generally prevalent in a country, the term Epidemic is used to express our sense of it. If disease prevail in a district, a city, or a part of a city (if such idea be *truly* reasonable) it is called Endemic. Here a most important question again arises in full view!—Viz. Do facts prove, at any time, ancient or modern (small Pox excepted) that, such Epidemic or Endemic disease, having become local in any country or district, may also become so located, by any means of *transportation* to other countries or districts, and in other *Atmospheres*? The constant intercourse, more or less, of more than three-fourths of our unremoved city population, (not to mention the intercourse of all the nearest points of the surrounded country) with our “*infected district*,” certainly disprove such *transportation*, and in ten thousand instances this season. It would then seem to be proved that the contagion talked of, whether local or foreign, continues fixed in the immediate *atmosphere* of our “*infected District*” only! Let it be so! and who ever knew our Mill-Pond, Lake, or marshy bilious, or Yellow fevers, to become Endemic, beyond their special location, by *transportation*, even by “*infected clothing*,” or other means of conveyance?

AN OLD CITIZEN.

NO. VI.

OCTOBER 13, 1822.

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH,

ON the subject of remedy, permit me to state, from undoubted information, that, in most parts of the West-Indies, there are now regular bred nurses, who take with them their large bathing tubs, and first immerse their patients in a warm bath; rubbing them with cloths, squeezing over them warmed lime and lemon juice, and causing them to drink plentifully of lemonade and other diluting drink. If a perspiration succeed, they clap their hands in signs of safety. They also administer Emetics and gentle purges if necessary. This “*sudorific*” practice seldom fails of cure, if the *golden moment* be not lost, and if applied immediately on the *first attack of cold chills*, and before the mucus begins to form in the *stomach*, and external fever sets in, which is about the second or

third day. As this said mucus or phlegm accumulates, through the body into the stomach, after a check of the perspiration, the fever, as a counteracting effect, increases in its struggle to relieve the patient.

These West-Indians have no terrors of *contagion*, they neither speak of, nor heed its importation, or exportation, they know its *true cause*, and call Yellow fever the highest grade of the indigenous bilious fevers amongst them. They have already, in most of the Islands, rendered its effects mild and manageable to a great extent, among themselves, and may, by this simple practice, "*within reach of every body*," ultimately neutralize its consequences, perhaps to its final melioration.

It is no longer among the native West-Indians that the climate fevers are so mortal, but among the people from the United States, and Europe, resorting there, who having been previously *taught to believe in a "specific infectious poison,"* to be inhaled by the breath, are consequently regardless of the *night damps, cold rains, and sudden changes of the atmosphere in those climates.* Thus the causes of death become greatly increased, through a false theory which they had been taught at home!

That I may be fully understood, I beg leave to explain my own simple view of this *said check* of the perspiration, now so little regarded.

Our Bodies are externally covered with a kind of net-work, called skin; consisting of innumerable *nerves*, or *pores*, which expand with heat, and contract with cold. In perfect health these nerves emit a constant *insensible* fluid or steam, when the body is agitated, appears in a visible sweat. Through these nerves, or pores, by far the greater portion of our food is discharged. When sudden cold seizes on a healthy body, these nerves experience shivering, and chills, which draw them shut, and the fluids cease to be discharged through them *externally*. This I apprehend to be a check of the perspiration, and may be more or less general over the whole body. Its effect also, is the precise manner in which Yellow fever begins, viz. with chills. It is then, *kind nature* instantly commences the work of relief through a reaction of internal heat, or fever. To effect this, the blood is set in rapid motion through the Body; and the pulse, from its natural beat of about seventy-five, is made to strike more than one hundred times in a minute. This heat, or fever, in the order of nature, reacts, with all its power on the external cold "*infection*," and a perspiration is thereby frequently forced, on bodies in previous good health, by the mere rapid motion of the blood, without any other aid than this increase of nature's fever heat. If the warm drinks, and bathing practice, as above stated, be instantly applied, on the first attack of cold, nature receives a powerful auxiliary (in her own way, though an external and internal heat,) towards an increased motion of the blood; and if a profuse sweat be the consequence, nine times out of ten, the pores open and *assume their functions*, and the patient is relieved in a few days. W

an attack of cold, in this season of the year be a *relapse*, on bodies previously unwell, and the efforts to produce perspiration fail, the heat, or fever, puts on an alarming *external* appearance, on or about the second or third day ; and continues to act with a proportionate, though natural and necessary vigor, towards a restoration. In these extremities we are most inclined to tamper with the patient, who ought not to be otherwise acted upon, until the paroxism of fever shall abate. To practice on this fever as a *cause*, in my view of it, is *death* ; to treat it as a *friend*, is *life* !

A fever pervades animated nature, and almost instantly follows diseases of every kind. It is then, an *effect*, not a *cause*, a *remedy*, not a *disease*, and ought to be promoted as a *friend* to *destroy* an *enemy*, WHEN ITSELF WILL DISAPPEAR ! It is nature's restorative. The medical practitioner is rarely called until the second stage of diseases,—he finds the patient in high fever ; “pestilential yellow fever” is declared ! In 1793-95 and 98,—(and as the young practitioner had been taught to practice,) in went the lancet, down went the calomel and jalap, all to *kill the fever*, treating it as a *cause*.—The fever is lessened, and the patient lapses in a *stupor*.—Again, the fever (deemed to be the dire enemy) rouses the patient for life, into action ;—other “copious bleedings* were then had, and purges repeated” to the entire emptiness of the body of its blood, and the bowels of their sustinence ! The fever is broken. The patient becomes cool and easy ; is not emaciated, conceits himself well, walks erect, at flighty intervals, though in a general *stupor*, THROUGH WANT OF *FEVER*, and *dies apparently cool and WITHOUT FEVER* !

The great danger, in all diseases, is the application of too much art, interrupting the efforts of nature.

Although the fact is notorious, it ought to be frequently repeated,—that, at every cold turn of our atmosphere, the *new cases* and *deaths*, were, in some instances, nearly double. Does not this prove, incontestibly, that these sudden colds, on diseased bodies, expedite their death, and also become the communicating cause to the healthy ?

It is also highly worthy of remark, that, a severe cold requires from *seven to ten* days, before the checked fluids, (accustomed to pass off through the pores) can become so concocted and concreted, as by coughing, and otherwise to afford relief, by a discharge of those fluids from the mouth. The last discharges by the mouth, are frequently seen in completely formed matter, when the patient is generally relieved. During this *process* of cure, the patient is in *great danger* from the least additional cold, or *relapse*.—The re-

* This is declared of George Washington, the Father of his Country ; who is believed to have sunk into premature death by this practice of bleeding so repeatedly performed on him. It is believed that, thousands have since fallen by like practice ; and millions may yet fall from a misapplication, and disregard of the only true means of relief, through a multiplicity of frivolous and *false hypothesis*.

markable coincidence of fact is, that, at these turning points of time, deaths take place, and generally between the said *seventh* and *tenth* days from the first attack. If at these turning points, the atmosphere then suddenly change, *life becomes suspended on a single thread*. It is then that the mucus becomes clogged in the body—when nature sinks, if it fail to run through and accomplish the above process of relief. At every cold change in the air the utmost care should be had to sustain, the accustomed temperature in the apartments of these ick.

Here also is seen the fallacy of the idea, that this “*previous infection*,” of an *unknown something*, may be for weeks in the body before it becomes developed; and which it never would be if no check of the perspiration had occurred; and for the simple reason, that no such other “*previous infection*” existed, excepting such as all mortal man is heir to, from the changeableness of the atmosphere.

If the “*sudorific*” practice shall prevail, it is confidently believed, that our fall fevers will be rendered mild, as they are daily becoming in the West Indies, from a true knowledge of their cause and management. In such case, *away goes all this “contagion, pestilence and poison”* in all fever cases. Nature will then be studied, by our Phyicians, in her *health*, and her *diseases*, on the broad basis of her elements, in every climate, and especially in our own. Disputations about non-entities will then be heard of no more, at least among the real students of nature, and particularly those of the Medical Faculty. Then we may witness the believers in the existing superstitions, nailing the horse-shoe, or other preventives, at their front-doors to avoid the fever; as by similar magic, to this day, the witches are repelled from the doors of the credulous.

In my next number, will be shewn, a few of the highest acknowledged cases of fever this year, and which go to substantiate the foregoing *facts*. I present these cases in full confidence that the inquiries may now also be made by others in the same cases; as well as those within their own observation, and future inquiry.

AN OLD CITIZEN.

NO. VII.

OCTOBER 19, 1822.

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH.

I NOW beg leave to trace certain other palpable causes and facts, to their final effects, in cases declared to be most decided, and violent Yellow fever this season.

First, I have from undoubted information that my much esteemed friend John Dover, of No. — Broadway, having understood that his neighbour's house had been broken open from the back way, *went on the night of Wednesday* through his own, and several other yards, in company with one or two Watchmen, to the place; and remained in a damp and chilling atmosphere, *out of doors*, and *bare headed* for more than three-quarters of an

hour! When on the same day he had a profuse sweat by drinking hot boneset-tea, and had been in bed for eight hours; and in the same time had also taken an emetic, &c. That he awoke near morning with a renewal of violent pains of the head, which soon penetrated to his back, shoulders and stomach;—and on the fifth or sixth day be died. This was a case of *relapse*.

Is it not probable that such exposure would affect the most healthy man alive, and how much more an old gentleman of eighty years, who had always lived in ease and tenderness? Certainly no "specific contagion," out of the common order of nature, seems necessary in this case.

Secondly.—The case of Mr. George Davidson, who died after seven days illness, I have the following facts from a fully accredited source.—Mr. Davidson said himself, that he had been for several days indisposed with a previous cold, and was convalescent. That in walking about he came to the Brick Church, now repairing near the Park. That he ascended into the steeple, during a very hot day. (Myself in ascending this same steeple, in the winter, was thrown into a profuse sweat.) That he indulged in the extensive view from this elevation, nearly one hour. That he never conceived himself more comfortable in his life, and was surprised at the coolness of the air in the steeple, when on the earth below it was so hot. That he was there seized with repeated chills, became some what alarmed, and descended. That in the subsequent night he awoke with violent pain in the head, neck, shoulders and back. That the fever came on shortly after, and about the third day he was seized with cramp in the stomach; and died on the seventh day, at No. 28 Barckley-street, being covered with petechial, or "pestilent spots," *so declared*, over his whole body! Here also was a case of partial relaps; and such cases are most frequently fatal, by stopping the discharge of the mucus which had been previously formed in the body.

Can there be required here, by the most scrupulous casuist, any other "infection" than was thus communicated in the steeple, and in the most pure atmosphere, and distinct from all filth or miasma of any kind? If the 'secret inhalation,' be here also inferred, and rendered necessary, I leave the pleasure of its application to the believers; and content myself by stating facts only.

Again.—The case of Mr. James Fowler, No. 43 Harrison-street, a lime cartman, I have the following information from his wife and the man who rode lime in company with him, and who also became drenched with rain while in a high perspiration the same evening; but, instantly on his return home, shifted his wet clothes, drank plentifully of warm tea, went to bed and experienced no evil effects from it. Now, why did not this man take the fever, as did Mr. Fowler?—Because the latter came home, wet with rain, after excessive labour, in riding lime in the district, and threw himself on the outside of the bed-cover, and lay there until nearly ten o'clock at night; when his wife, believing him not home, went up

stairs and found him in constant chills, and shivering, and in his wet clothes. The same symptoms as above described followed, and he died the eleventh day. The Doctors declaring, to me, as the most decided case they had ever seen.

Is there room here, between the common, and natural causes, and their effects,—(known and experienced by every body) to admit a *single particle* of this said “contagion or previous infection?” To my mind none is necessary.

I shall only state the case of Robert Newel, engineer, No. 383 Greenwich-street,—the patient of Dr. Brush. The person living in the same house with Mr. Newel, told me that, he, Newel, had repaired the engine of a steam-boat, near the North-Battery.—That the work required some amendment in a few days thereafter, and he was then obliged to go to White-Hall to do it; about a mile from his home. That the owners were very urgent, and that he worked several days, until late at night; and that on Saturday night when he finished, it was past twelve o'clock. That he then came into the open air, out of the hold of the Steam-Boat, in a high state of perspiration, and walked home. That in the morning, as by agreement of the two families they were to take a walk, which Mr. Newel at first declined, but ultimately went, complaining of pains, such as have been described. He died the tenth day from the said Saturday night.

In this case I leave others to draw conclusions; having only stated simple *facts*. There is no end with reasoners “who quit their sphere and rush into the clouds.”

It must be useless to multiply instances. Let every citizen, and especially our official reporters to your Honorable Body, make diligent inquiry, as above, bring the patient back to a review of his previous conduct and situation; and the answers will uniformly be, I was *there*, became heated, and *neglected* to guard myself against the night air.—Was unavoidably exposed to a cold rain.—Removed my flannels *unwisely*—changed by dress to clothing less warm than that removed. At the Ball-Room, became heated and took a heavy cold in returning home late at night! &c. &c.

When the foregoing *facts* are honestly contrasted with the vague and subtle reasonings to sustain, imported or domestic “contagion, previous infection &c.” it is most devoutly hoped and believed that, the solid mercury of intellect cannot hesitate long to determine on the side of a non-contagion, other than through the causes here contended for; and that, at no time has any “infection,” of plague, or other fever, truly and of known fact, been traced to importation, except through the mists of dubious hypothesis any where over the whole globe; Small Pox and all other *positively known*, contagious diseases excepted.

Inoculation of Small Pox, was first performed on criminals; and that leprous disease yielded almost its entire fatally, when the practice became general. The kine-pock inoculation has produced its *small puerification*.

Respecting the plagues and pestilences of the old world, inoculations with the most virulent matter to be collected from the subjects of them, have failed of communication.

I am respectfully informed that, in Philadelphia, some of the Faculty had inoculated themselves and others, with the gangrene, or mortified matter, taken from the highest Yellow Fever subjects, both alive and dead.—That the dark discharges also, from the stomach, heated into steam, have been inhaled without evil effect !

When our Yellow Fever thus refuses to be taken from its visible self, it certainly has no analogy with the Small Pox ; and all danger by personal contact must be given up. Where then can this "contagion" exist, or be derived from ? And with what must we come in contact, to receive the "infection" ? The believers in contagion, and of both parties, now say—" WITH THE ATMOSPHERE !" First, with that atmosphere which had become INFECTED BY SHIPS, who had their INFECTION from clothes taken off sick bodies, or derived it from the filth of their STONE BALLAST ; or something else !—And again, secondly, that it is caused by local nuisances, and not from SHIPS. And lastly—that both SHIPS and NUISANCES, and altogether, MAY infect the atmosphere with Yellow Fever contagion !!!

It is then an "infected atmosphere" from other Countries, which we IMPORT, and our atmosphere, thus impregnated by it, becomes, in turn, the only article of export from us to distant regions ; when, strange to tell, notwithstanding the daily and nightly intercourse with our 'infected district,' together with the high winds blowing through it in all directions, we cannot extend the evil half a mile around !—That every one who had it, this season, is declared to have gone to the district for it ; with very few ALLOWABLE exceptions !

These incomprehensible theories, are all derived by confounding things totally dissimilar, in their nature and tendency. Viz. SMALL POX, with YELLOW FEVER ! I have met the observation somewhere—" that TRUTH and THEORY stood related, as ONE to INFINITY !" Here then is ample scope for mutual forbearance, on this subject.

The difficulty to confine this contagious atmosphere, in all cases of distant transport, becomes inconceivable ; when we take a fact-view, of only ONE HOUR of the incessant travel we take on our Globe. Viz. First.—In twenty-four hours it turns ONCE around, from West to East, and of course takes us with it, at the rate of about ONE THOUSAND MILES an hour. And—Secondly,—And in the same hour, it flies with us, in another direction ; viz. in its passage around the Sun, at the rate of more than SIXTY-EIGHT THOUSAND MILES in the SAME HOUR ;—and requires one year to complete our voyage, at that rate of travel !

There is however one view, which MAY have escaped all the exists on this subject, and which MAY be rendered favorable to their ideas of contagion.—Viz. That ONCE in every twenty-four hours, we occupy, in the VAST EXPANSE, all the pestilential

regions on our Earth, which are in the same latitude with us.—Thus we arrive daily in the same region, which Constantinople now occupies, in Europe, (and we may be there at this moment!) And not far also from that pestilential spot ; ALEPPO, in Asia ; MARSEILLES, in France ; SEVILLE and "CATALONIA," in Spain ; and MAY be SUPPOSED to have inhaled some portion of their plagues and "*poisons*;" which MAY have escaped from their several "*INFECTED ATMOSPHERES!*" such SUPPOSITION will also be deemed a far more rational cause of the "*infection*," of our atmosphere itself, than many others which have been assigned, both for the domestic *generation*, and foreign *importation* of our calamity. But when the *fact* is known of our daily passage, through the above, and many other of the *regions* of plagues and pestilence, the *fact* may be too frightful for a further detail !

From this SUPPOSITION, an important fact is again, and unexpectedly thrown into full view,—Viz.—The true causes of the sudden *CHANGES AND WHIRLINGS* of the atmospheric fluid (into which all worlds float and "*run their destined rounds!*") and which, evidently arise, from the rapid flight of our planet and its lunar attendant,—riding *MAJESTICALLY* through the regions of space ; and in company, not only with its seven or eight brilliant companions, and their satellites ; but amidst the choir of millions of other systems which compose the *UNIVERSE* !

Here then, the cause of the changes in our atmosphere is demonstrated. The effects of these changes have already been endeavoured to be shewn, as they stand related to our *health*, and also to the *diseases* peculiar to our climate.

AN OLD CITIZEN.

NO. VIII.

OCTOBER 29, 1822.

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH,

IN winter the same causes, generally, produce Pleurisy's, Catarrh, Rheumatism &c.—and that greatest of all the destroyers of human life, Consumption ; all derived from *nothing*, except it be "*a little cold!*" The same causes and preventives, and mode of cure, if instantly applied when cold is taken, would be as sure and salutary against the effects of Consumption in winter as of Yellow Fever in the summer and Fall. Consumptions, however, are formed at all seasons, and through like neglect. The *utility* of a Board of health in these cases, would soon be found far-away to exceed that now established merely on account of our summer and Fall fevers. The establishment of a perpetual body of this description, to receive and daily report ALL diseases with their *FACT CAUSES* and consequences, (and under like penalties as now in yellow fever cases,) would be of vast public utility; but—no hypothesis should be heard ! If one was found suffering in excruciating pain from the teeth it would be reported (if such was the fact)—that he or she had neglected, daily to inspect, and cleanse those ivory cogs, never in

tended to rot, and which had been suffered to decay through a want of cleanliness, and a consequent bad breath. Such an one would be recommended to the dentist ; and the fact made known for the benefit of the community, &c. &c.—It is believed that, one full half of all the physical miseries, suffered in this world proceed from a most culpable neglect of the TEETH ; with which, parents, and guardians, in the first place, now stand justly charged. Nine-tenths of *this human misery*, is already *seen* and *known* to be within the scope of *certain preventive, and positive control*, yet to this day not one in fifty give it heed until they feel the pain ! If such a Board of Health was established, on a proper basis ; in less than six years, we would exhibit to the world the most useful, truly “*science*”—learned an enlightened medical Faculty in the world ! and a highly improved moral people ! It is feared that medical “*science*” among us, is on the decline, through the existing superstitions. If so, it is greatly to be lamented.

To return.—Thousands are daily heard to exclaim,—“if the citizens had not removed, hundreds would now die every day !”—“Yes, indeed, yes, indeed,” is re-echoed around the land !—And here we are *once more* transported into the unknown regions of physical metaphysics, on a proposition, not, *possible to be decided*. The weak side of our nature is to love the marvellous ; and, by this question we are again led to quit our sphere, and grasp among the clouds ; instead of remaining on earth, *edging along*, from *fact to fact*, and studying nature in the recondite of her elementary changes, in our own *region* ; and as these elements shall be found to operate, in relation to our *health and diseases in this climate*.

If our present mild and generally very healthy season, be made the test on this *abstract question of deaths* ! I would be inclined to *guess* from the *cases* above stated, and eleven others of like character, known, and noted by me, this season, that, the number of deaths, in case of non-removal, throughout the city, would not have been, by *one half*, as numerous as they now are, or may yet be ;—*Provided*, in case of non-removal, the people had carefully guarded against the changeableness of our atmosphere,—kept themselves cool and as free from agitation as possible, and had not rushed into the tops of church steeples, nor exposed themselves to damps, rains, night air, &c. through a *false belief*, that an unknown poison, existed in the ‘infected district,’ and THAT, was the only thing to be avoided to ensure safety !—In the cases of my friend, Dover, Davidson, Fowler and Newel, above named, and eleven others, noted by me, and all deemed, by the reporters, to be of the *highest grades of Yellow Fever this season* ; the most reasonable probability is, that *not one of these would have died*, if they had possessed a true knowledge of the consequences, of their several exposures. I do therefore submit this sample of *fifteen cases*, this season, to your Hon. Body, on the said abstract question of deaths, in case of non-removal.

Although I have at no time, removed, myself, because of prevailing fever, but have always been present in every year of it.

since 1793 ; yet I am not now prepared to say that, on no occasion of epidemic and special local effect of fever, in our city, (or if resident in the neighborhood of mill-ponds, lakes and marshes,) would I refuse ; if, for instance, similar indications, and *FACTS*, should again appear, as in 1798, in this city.—Even in such case, however, I, should rely more on the precautions, above stated, for my safety than upon removal, and the neglect of them, in town or country, in this season of our year. At no time has a general removal taken place, that a number of deaths have not occurred by it. These are always *traced* back to our “infected pestilential city ;” when the *agitations of the removal* were the true cause of such deaths. In these cases the length of time after such removal, is held of little consideration by the theorists !

In hot climates, where the *plagues* or high fevers, as with us, occasionally prevail, most of the inhabitants, instead of removing, shut themselves in their houses, and there remain, in great safety ; by keeping themselves *cool and easy* ; until the atmosphere becomes uniform either by *heat or cold*, as has been remarked in No. 1.

The special locality of certain epidemic or endemic diseases, need not be here further discussed. Such diseases pervade, occasionally, *all living nature*, both animal and vegetable ; and are, *alternately*, more or less general, in every district of the *Globe* ; whether on the mountains top, or in the valley beneath ;—and affect—

“ Not man alone, but all that roam the wood,
“ Or wing the sky, or roll along the flood.”

It is on such occasions, that death ravages on life, in a special manner, and all we can do, to spin out the thread—is, to avoid the known causes of it, and apply the best remedies for relief.

Let every individual on returning to his home, guard with every possible care, against all extreme excitements,—excess of labour, and agitation ; and in case of an attack of chills, to fly to the warm bathing, &c. with the agency of his Physician.

If the desolating appearances of the lime and the fences were ordered to be removed, as far as practicable, before the inhabitants shall return, or the city be again generally visited, it would prevent many painful associations and worse than useless impressions, and remarks of foreigners, and others ;—disapproving of our *city residence* as a permanent establishment.

To conclude.—Although it is my entire belief, that all experiments which go to confirm the idea of a “specific contagion in Yellow Fever,” were, *as such*, objectionable ; nevertheless, on all propositions of rational experiment, or such whose effects I was ignorant of,—my open expression has been that,—the means for a *full scope* of such experiments, ought to have been provided ; *Because* from such efforts, proving *ineffectual*, (as I had no doubt they would do,) the *best* means by which *TRUTH* could be elicited, would ultimately be made to appear.

Lastly.—The only question now is—If said Fever be *CONTAGIOUS*.

AN OLD CITIZEN.

EXTRACT FROM A
SHORT DISSERTATION
ON THE SOURCE OF
Epidemic and Pestilential Diseases.

By DR. CHARLES MACLEAN, OF CALCUTTA.

"IT has been remarked," says Dr. Rush, speaking of the yellow fever of Philadelphia, "that this fever did not spread in the country, when carried there by persons who were infected, and afterwards died with it."

"Convincing proofs these, that the disease did not depend upon contagion, but upon the state of the atmosphere. The various ways in which the College of Physicians of Philadelphia and Dr. Rush attempted to account for the origin of the contagion, which they supposed had produced the yellow fever of 1793, shew into what inconsistencies the most sensible men may be betrayed, when they attempt to reason upon false data. Having all taken the *existence* of contagion for granted, they only differ with respect of the *origin* of it. The College was of opinion, that it was *imported*; Dr. Rush affirmed, that it was *generated* in the city. A better description cannot be given of the several hypotheses, which distracted the faculty, upon this occasion, that in his own words, "public report had derived it" (the contagion) "from several different Islands; had chased it from ship to ship, and from shore to shore; and finally conveyed it, at different times, in the city, alternately by dead and living bodies; and from these tales, all of which, when investigated, were proved to be without foundation, the college of physicians composed their letter. It would seem, from this conduct of the college, as if medical superstition had changed its names, and that in accounting for the origin of pestilential fevers, celestial, planetary, and demoniacal influence, had only yielded to the term—*importation*." But it does not appear that Dr. Rush, in his attempts to trace the origin of the contagion, was more successful than the college. He supposed it to arise from putrid, vegetable exhalation, produced by a heap of damaged coffee, lying on a wharf. But the progress of the disease was not traced, with any certainty, to that focus. It is evident, indeed, from Dr. Rush's own account, that the inhabitants of other streets had been as early as generally affected, as those of the streets in the immediate neighborhood of the coffee.

"In this, and every other case of epidemic and pestilential disease, the existence of contagion would seem to have been uniformly taken for granted, not only without examination, but even contrary to the evidence of numerous facts—a conduct certainly not less unphilosophical in medicine, than in any other department of science.

"Let the existence of contagion be once admitted as a fact, and there is nothing more easy then to trace its origin to some ideal source.

"If, for instance, it cannot be traced to actual contact, it will probably be discovered, that the patient has, at some recent period, been exposed to the effluvia of rotten hemp, flax, coffee, cabbage, onions, black pepper, or potatoes.

"The effects of a popular belief in such opinions are, in my estimation, no less injurious to mankind, than they are humiliating to the medical profession.

"Another advantage that would result from rejecting the doctrine of contagion, is that the quarantines usually exacted of ships, coming from places suspected of contagion, would no longer be considered necessary. The hardship, or rather the cruelty of such ordeals, is too evident to require a comment. Could the contagion be conveyed in the manner supposed, the injury to individuals must of course be suffered, on account of the community. But if it be proved that this cannot happen, the restriction must appear exceedingly absurd. It is probable, that London being exempted from pestilential diseases, for many years past, will be imputed to the wonderful strictness, with which Mediterranean ships have been made to perform this forty days farce."

Important

NOTE.—I have recently conversed with a gentleman from the Floridas.—He says, the natives there, have rarely died with the fever this season; which has been so mortal among the numerous visitors from the U. States to that newly acquired territory. The natives had no idea of the "rotten pine-apple, and the decayed orange importation!" nor of the home "nuisances," from the dead animals in certain of their ponds, which had become dry; as they had been accustomed to these things, until they were taught otherwise by their WISE VISITORS. They were as ignorant of these *causes of fever* as we were, previous to 1793; and only took great care to shield themselves, and families from the *rains, damps, and night air*; to which the new-comers paid little or no attention, and DIED!



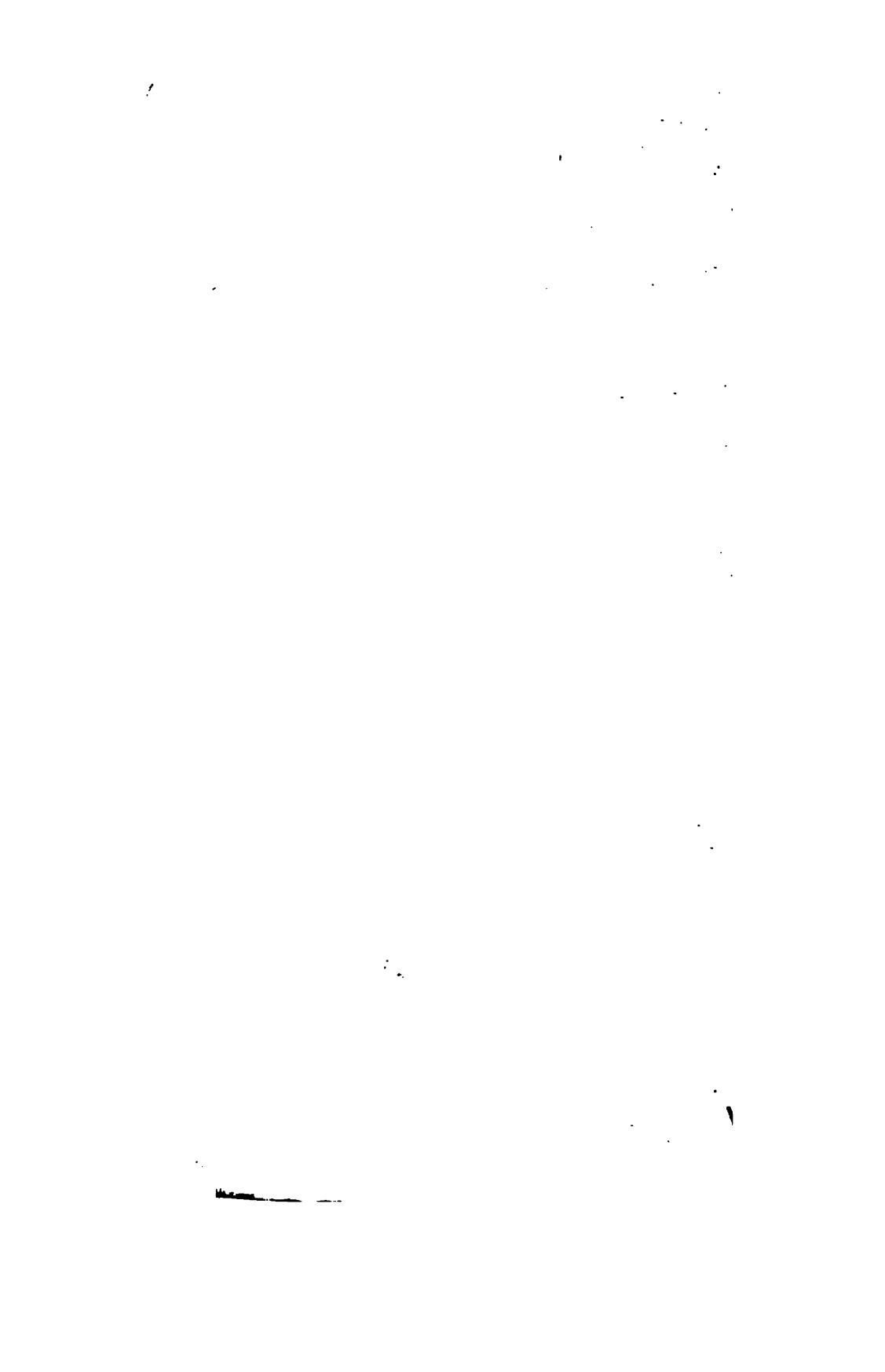
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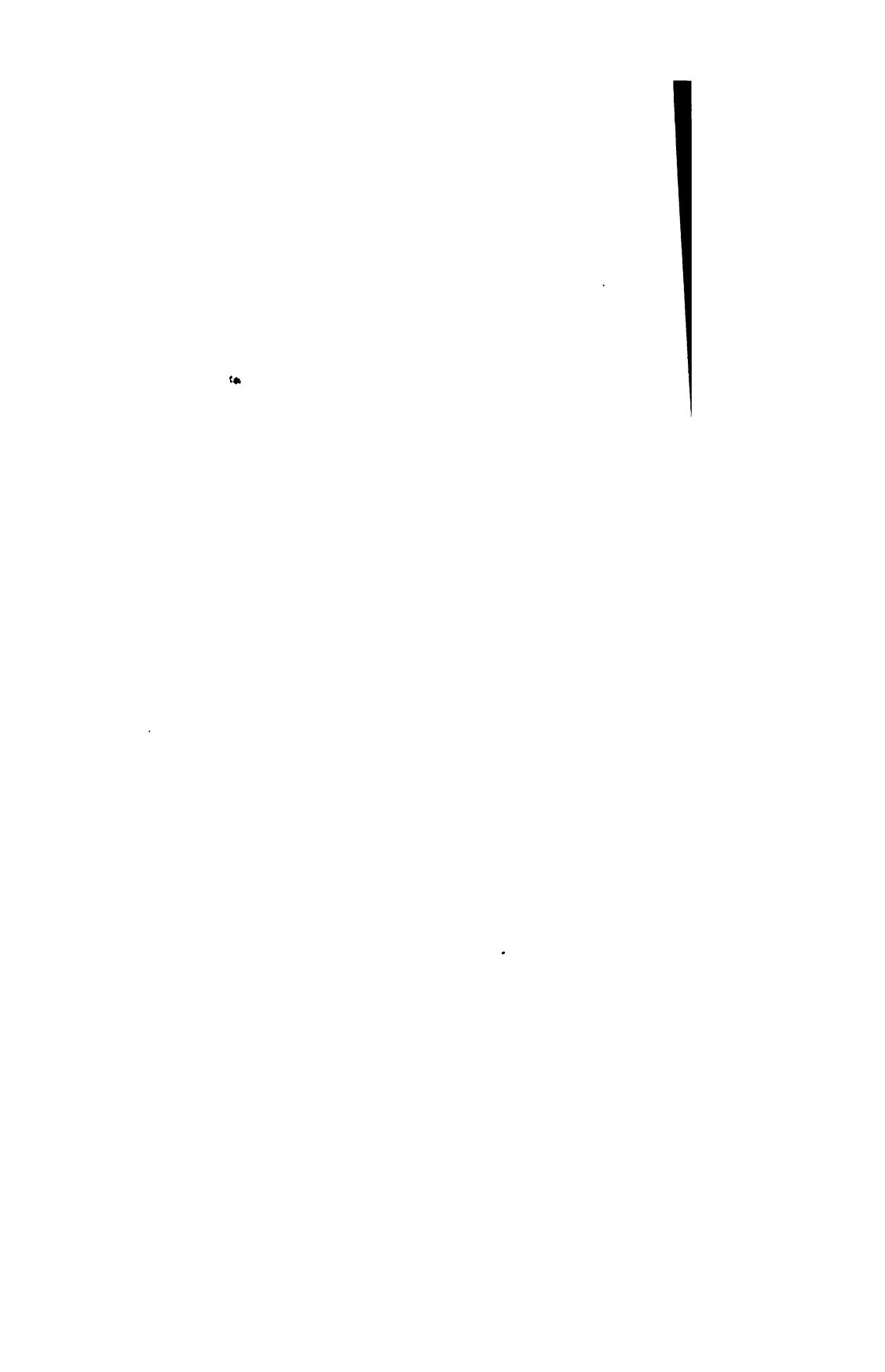


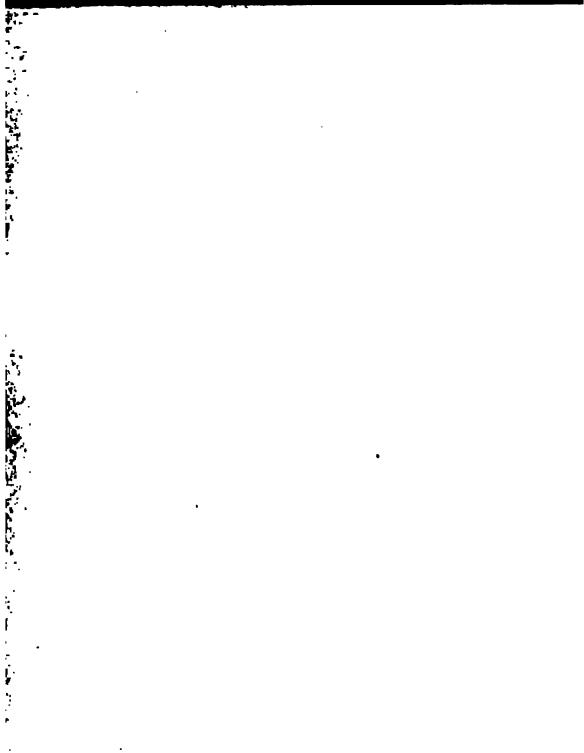














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